

In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for cross marketing products between a first company and a second company engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method performed over an interconnected plurality of point-of-sale terminals and a server, and comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second companies, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second company, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first company;

at the first company, identifying a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product of a first company by a particular consumer at a first point-of-sale terminal, granting the discount and storing an indication of the purchase of the first product in a database on the server;

at the first company, conditioning the grant of a discount for a second product at a second company on the purchase of the first product at the first company, and

at the second company, offering for sale the second product if the particular consumer makes a purchase of the first product;

at the second company, receiving a request from the particular consumer for the second product, querying the database to determine [[if]] that the particular consumer has purchased the first product from the first company, and standing ready to accept providing the discount on the second product, and updating the database to reflect the providing;

based on the first product being a cross-marketed product, calculating and recording an amount of cross-marketing revenue realized from a predetermined portion of the cost of the straight sale the first purchase to a marketing fund account in the database; and

based on the providing of the discount, allocating at least a portion of the cross-marketing revenue and a predetermined portion of the cost of the discount in the fund to reimburse the second company for the discount.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the discount is a 100 percent discount step of conditionally granting a discount comprises:

— at a first company, conditioning the grant of a 100% discount for a second product at a second company on the purchase of a first product at the first company.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the discount is less than 100 percent step of conditionally granting a discount comprises:

— at a first company, conditioning the grant of a less-than-100% discount for a second product at a second company on the purchase of a first product at the first company.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of wherein the granting comprises:

recognizing the purchase of the first product at the first company by a consumer; and crediting an account of the consumer with the discount.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of :
notifying the consumer of the discount.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[10]] 1, further comprising the steps of:

at a third company, conditioning the grant of a second discount for the second product at the second company on the purchase of a third product at the third company;

establishing a further parameter of a cross-marketing relationship between a third company and the second company by mutual consent of the second and third companies, the further parameter including a second discount on the second product, the second discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a third product offered for sale by the third company; and

at the second company, standing ready to accept provide the first and second discount discounts, on the second product;

wherein the step of setting comprises accepting the discount and the second discount on the second product.

13. (Currently amended) A method for cross marketing products between a first company and a second company engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method performed over an interconnected plurality of electronic sales terminals and a server, and comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second companies, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second company, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first company;

at [[a]] the first company, conditioning the grant of a promotional discount value for a second product at a second company on a purchase of a first product at the first company;

recognizing a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product at one of the plurality of electronic sales terminals at the first company by a consumer and the grant of a granting the discount;

crediting an account of the consumer maintained at the server with the discount;

notifying the consumer of the discount; and

based on a providing of the discount to the consumer, depositing a predetermined amount of money into [[an]] a marketing fund account maintained at the server for the benefit of

the second company in at least partial compensation for accepting providing the discount; and
at the second company, offering for sale the second product, receiving a request from the consumer for the second product, and standing ready to accept provide the discount promotional discount value on the second product,

wherein the amount of money deposited into the marketing fund account [[is]] includes a predetermined percentage of revenue realized from the purchase of the first product and a predetermined percentage of the cost of the discount.

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a further parameter of a cross-marketing relationship between a third company and the second company by mutual consent of the second and third companies, the further parameter including a second discount on the second product, the second discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a third product offered for sale by the third company; and

~~at a third company, conditioning the grant of a second discount for the second product at the second company on the purchase of a third product at the third company;~~

~~at the second company, standing ready to accept the second discount on the second product; and~~

~~at the second company, selling the second product, accepting and providing the discount and the second discount on the second product.~~

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A method for cross marketing products between a first department and a second department at a company using an electronic sales terminal and a server coupled by an electronic communications link, wherein the first and second departments are engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second departments, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the

second department, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first department;

at a company, conditioning the grant of a discount at one of a plurality of sales terminals for a second product at a second department within the company on a purchase at the same or a different one of the plurality of sales terminals of a first product at a first department of the company;

at the first department, recognizing a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product at the first department at a first one of a plurality of sales terminals by a consumer and the grant of a granting the discount;

crediting an account of the consumer maintained on the server with the discount;

notifying the consumer of the discount;

based on a providing of the discount to the consumer, depositing a predetermined amount of money into [[an]] a marketing fund account maintained on the server for the benefit of the second department in at least partial compensation for accepting providing the discount; and

at the second department, receiving a request from the consumer for the second product offering for sale the second product and standing ready to accept provide the discount at the same or a different one of the plurality of sales terminals on the second product, wherein the money deposited into the marketing fund account for the benefit of the second department amounts to a predetermined percentage of revenue realized from the purchase of the first product and a predetermined percentage of the cost of the discount.

17. (Currently amended) A method for cross marketing products between a first company and a second company engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method performed over an interconnected plurality of point-of-sale terminals and a server, and comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second companies, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second company, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first company; and

at the first company:

at a first company, conditioning the grant of a promotional discount value for a second product at a second company on a purchase of a first product at the first company, and
at the second company, offering for sale the second product and standing ready to accept the promotional discount value on the second product;

the method further including:

identifying a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product by a particular consumer at a first point-of-sale terminal;

sending first purchase data identifying at least the first product from the first point-of-sale terminal in substantially real-time to the server;

determining at the server that the first purchase data identifies a cross-marketed product for which the parameter has been established;

based on the first product being a cross-marketed product, granting a promotional discount value to an account associated with the particular consumer, the promotional discount value contributing towards satisfying the discount condition;

providing an indication of the promotional discount value on a receipt issued to the consumer for the straight sale; and

comparing the first purchase with qualifying cross-marketing purchases, and if the first purchase includes at least one qualifying first company cross-marketing product, then: (i) awarding the promotional discount value associated with that first purchase to an account identified with the particular consumer, and (ii) transferring an indication of the awarded promotional discount value back to the first point-of-sale terminal and printing the indication of the promotional discount value on a receipt issued to the consumer at the first point-of-sale terminal for that purchase; and

recording an amount of [[the]] cross-marketing revenue realized from at least the first purchase the straight sale to a marketing fund account, wherein the marketing fund account is structured to defray the second company's costs in dispensing products in conjunction with a first promotional discount value earned by the purchase of the first company's products, and the first company's costs in dispensing products in conjunction with a second promotional discount value earned by the purchase of the second company's products.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously presented) The method in claim 17, wherein the server further includes a marketing engine.

20. (Currently amended) The method in claim 17, further comprising:

identifying [[the]] a purchase of [[a]] the second product by the particular customer from the second company at a second point-of-sale terminal;

sending second purchase data identifying at least the second product from the second point of sale terminal in substantially real-time to the server;

comparing the particular customer account account's stored promotional discount value with a required promotion value redemption threshold on the server, the threshold value satisfying the condition; and

if the consumer account account's stored promotional discount value is high enough to permit redemption of a promotion is at least equal to the threshold value, then permitting the consumer to redeem a promotion based on their a promotion value for the second company product the discount.

21. (Currently amended) The method in claim 17, wherein the promotional discount value comprises a predetermined number of award points.

22. (Currently amended) The method in claim 17, wherein the amount recorded into the marketing fund comprises a predetermined percentage of the revenue realized from the first purchase straight sale.

23. (Currently amended) The method as in claim 17, further including receiving [[an]] a consumer account inquiry from a consumer at a point-of-sale terminal at the store of a company participating in the cross-marketing.

24. (Currently amended) The method as in claim 17, further comprising receiving a consumer's unique identification number at the beginning [[or]] of a sales transaction or [[an]] a consumer account inquiry transaction.

25. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein the server is an in-store server.

26. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein the server comprises an out-of-store external server.

27. (New) The method as in claim 1, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.

28. (New) The method as in claim 13, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.

29. (New) The method as in claim 16, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.

30. (New) The method as in claim 17, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.